

Message Text

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ORIGIN COA-01

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, SENV, UK, JA, ID, MY, SN, IMCO

SUBJECT: STUDY OF EFFECTS OF DISPERSANTS USED ON OIL

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SPILL IN MALACCA STRAIT

1. USE OF DISPERSANTS ON PRESENT OIL SPILL IN MALACCA STRAIT IS FIRST LARGE SCALE USE OF DISPERSANTS SINCE TORREY CANYON DISASTER IN 1968. PRESENTLY, THERE IS DISAGREEMENT INTERNATIONALLY CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF DISPERSANTS ON THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THEIR USE. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) FEELS THAT USE OF DISPERSANTS ON THIS SPILL PROVIDES IDEAL OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDY ON EFFECTS OF DISPERSANTS ON MARINE ENVIRONMENT. EPA IS OF OPINION THAT BIOLOGICAL AND WATER AND SEDIMENT CHEMISTRY STUDIES SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT. ONLY 2 OR 3 EXPERTS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT STUDY.

2. FOR LONDON: WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY CHECKING INFORMALLY WITH IMCO SECRETARIAT TO DETERMINE WHETHER IMCO HAS OR IS PLANNING TO SEND A TEAM OF EXPERTS TO MAKE SUCH A STUDY.

3. FOR TOKYO, SINGAPORE, KUALA LUMPUR AND JAKARTA: IF EMBASSIES HAVE NO RESERVATIONS, APPRECIATE YOU CHECKING

ON A LOW-KEY BASIS WITH APPROPRIATE HOST GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY ARE PLANNING SUCH A STUDY.

4. IF NEITHER IMCO, NOR ANY OF THE GOVERNMENTS ARE PLANNING SUCH A STUDY AND EPA OBSERVER MAKES A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION, EPA IS READY TO SEND TWO EXPERTS (BIOLOGIST AND CHEMIST) TO CARRY OUT A LOW-PROFILE, UNPUBLICIZED STUDY, WITH APPROVAL OF CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS, OF COURSE. EPA IS SENDING AN OBSERVER WITH THE COAST GUARD STRIKE FORCE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO EPA ON TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY OF STUDY. ALL DATA AND OTHER INFORMATION GATHERED AND REPORTS PRODUCED WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO IMCO AND CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS. IF IMCO AND/OR ANY OF GOVERNMENTS PLAN SUCH A STUDY, EPA WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE OR AT LEAST RECEIVE COPIES OF DATA AND RESULTANT REPORTS. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO URGE THAT RESULTS OF ANY STUDY DONE BY HOST GOVERNMENTS ALSO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO IMCO.

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5. WOULD APPRECIATE PRIORITY REPLY FOR ACTION COA IN THE DEPARTMENT. STUDY SHOULD BE STARTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. KISSINGER

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